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But Houses for Sale

Newest State City Is Company Town

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Residents of West Virginia's newest city own no houses.

Gary, McDowell County, which had its charter of incorporation accepted by the attorney general in September of 1970, is owned almost entirely by U. S. Steel. The majority of the company's coal is mined there.

U. S. Steel owns all houses, the water plant, provides garbage pickup and electrical power. It also does all maintenance work to the structures and pays real estate taxes on them.

The steel company giant initiated the move to form the city from five small coal towns near its massive coal preparation plant. Those towns are Gary, Wilcoe, Thorpe, Elbert and Filbert.

U. S. Steel's reasoning behind the incorporation is to alleviate the burden of maintaining the houses and to save money by not having to pay real estate taxes.

The company purchased all land encompassed by the city from the Pocahontas Land Co. and is to sell the houses to residents now renting them. Through this move, revenues usually expended for maintenance, is expected to be saved.

In return, the residents can expect houses at a minimum cost, low water rates because U. S. Steel is donating the water plant to the city and a rather large city budget because of industrial taxes the company will have to pay.

For U. S. Steel, the move will mean a vast saving in revenues but to the residents of the area it was probably the only avenue for them to take in order to maintain their house-keeping functions.

Engineers working for U. S. Steel surveyed and set the boundaries of the city and the company petitioned the McDowell County Court for approval.

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ON MARCH 16, 1970, residents voted to incorporate and elected a seven-member charter board for the purpose of drafting a charter, which was completed in June of 1970. Under the new Municipal Code of West Virginia passed by the 1969 legislature, the attorney general accepted the charter of incorporation in September.

The next step for Gary, originally founded about 1901 when coal was first mined there, is a city election for mayor, recorder, and five councilmen on Feb. 9.

With the deadline for filing Jan. 26, the 2,800 residents of the Class III city, haven't beaten a path to the county clerk's office to register.

With less than 10 days remaining to file, only one resident has done so. Lloyd Johnson of Wilcoe is seeking the First Ward council seat.

Also included in the election will be a provision for approval of the charter. If passed, the incorporation takes effect July 1 of this year. Candidates elected also take office at that time.

Although Gary, second largest city in McDowell County, is just getting on its feet, it can stake a claim to being one of the state's top five coal producing cities and if nothing else, home of the state double-A football champions.

1819 Ohio River

Survey Found in Ky.

FRANKFORT, Ky. — An historic 1819 survey of the Ohio River was uncovered accidentally in the secretary of state's office, and lawyers say it may be used in Kentucky's river boundary dispute with Ohio which is before the U. S. Supreme Court.